

**Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission Meeting
May Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2021**

Commission Members Present:

Chad Major	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
Karen St. Germain	Governor's Appointee
Butch Browning	State Fire Marshal
Louis Romero	Professional Firefighters Association of Louisiana
William Parker	Louisiana State Firemen's Association
Bryan Adams	Governor's Appointee
Ken Himel	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Brian Lindberg	Louisiana State Firemen's Association

Attendees Present via Zoom:

Russell Di Salvo	Louisiana Fire Chief's Association
Brandon Davis	Governor's Appointee

Commission Members Absent:

Matt Lee	Chancellor's Designee from LSU
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In Attendance:

Christine Earnheart	FETI
Loree Ramezan	FETI
Carey King	FETI
R. Keith Bennett	FETI
Kathe Jones	FETI
Dan Wallis	SFM
Michael Donahue	FETI
Mike Truax	FETI
Mark Treadway	OSFM
Sasha Thackaberry	LSU-OCE
T.K. Devall	FETI
Brandon Whiddon	FETI
Greg Trahan	LSU-ORED
Myles Kirkland	FETI
Donald King	FETI
Dustin Kleinpeter	FETI
Chris Levay	LOTA VFD
Chad Robinson	St. George Fire
Rusty Shoultz	SFM
Matt Ard	St. George Fire
Darren Ramirez	Plaquemine Fire
Samuel Joubert	FETI
Eric Kleinpeter	FETI
Miranda Meynard	FETI
Megan Broom	FETI

Albert Anthony	FETI
Crystal Bowman	FETI
Chris Soileau	Ville Platte Fire Department
Scott Dupre	Ville Platte Fire Department
Patrick Derouselle	Ville Platte Fire Department
Faban Poullard	Ville Platte Fire Department
Darrin Cagnolatti	FETI
Blance Bankston	FETI
David New	FETI
Lucas Navarre	FETI
Winston Decuir	LSU
Andrew Degenhardt	FETI
James Frosch	FETI
Richard Wells	FETI

QUORUM PRESENT

The Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Commission was called to order by Mr. Chad Major. Invocation was performed. Pledge was performed as well. Mr. Major called the roll and announced that a quorum was present. The meeting began.

Chairman's Report

He turned the floor over to Ms. Thackaberry for her to go over updates on the transition. She began her presentation by introducing Mr. Decuir and Mr. Trahan. She informed them that she had sent out an email with the estimated timeline for the transition. She apologized because at the last meeting she had outlined a few plans that in fact were not going to happen at the last meeting. July 1 was going to be the functional transfer which was basically sub-contracting the activities of fire training to the fire marshal's office. From a functional perspective, the individuals that were on the team at FETI would become part of the fire marshal's team and the building and equipment would go over as well as the finances that came with that.

The transfer and contract from a legislative perspective would be active from July 1, 2021- March 2022. It would run until the beginning of the next legislative session next March when the process for a formal transfer could occur from a legal perspective. Priorities highlighted included Mr. Wallis leading the team at FETI and Mr. Trahan leading the transition team. One of their main concerns was taking care of the people employed. Civil service would be involved. Mr. Browning added that even though it would be a long working process, in the end it would be worth it, and everyone would be taken care of.

A question was raised from Zoom. It was asked if LSU employees transferring into the department would be held to the standard civil service one year probation period. Ms. St. Germain answered that there was not a standard probationary period. The probation was set by the employee basically.

Mr. Wallis began his presentation. He was very excited about the changes. He and Loree were setting up an anonymous system for employees to ask questions so that any concerns could be handled. They would also be having employee meetings next week face to face to discuss any questions they had about the department transfer. These meetings would be held for individual groups separately then would bring everyone together. They were putting together a 60-day plan and a 90-day together.

There were also some safety issues that would immediately need to be addressed. Several on Zoom were asking for an explanation on why the department was switching from LSU to the fire marshal's office. Ms. Thackaberry explained that even though she was new to the whole process, her understanding was that this had been a goal for quite some time. There were some synergies that they felt could be leveraged better for this department by the switch and then they could have more input in terms of what was going in the trainings, future direction and operation of the department. The structural change was designed to support the future direction and also to have an intentional further buildout of what FETI was so that they could become one of the premiere places available for fire training nationally.

There were some questions regarding the accreditation once the department transfer took place. Mr. Major explained that FETI would still be under LSU and LSU was in charge of the accreditation process. In the interim, the fire marshal's office would need to become an IFSAC and ProBoard accreditor. As well, in that interim they would be deciding how all that would transfer in the final transition. There were some questions regarding the training levels and whether they were going to keep the same training levels or were they trying to improve them. Mr. Major stated that the whole idea was to take what they had today and make it into something better. This was the simplest way to explain it.

It was asked via Zoom whether the trainings that were already scheduled would continue as planned, or would they have to be rescheduled should a lapse be expected in the availability to schedule and post classes in the second half of 2021 and how would it affect trainings that were also scheduled at Pine Country. Mr. Wallis answered that the trainings scheduled would still continue and they did not anticipate cancelling any classes even if they did have to make adjustments here and there.

It was asked via Zoom what the plan was regarding part time adjunct instructors for FETI. Mr. Major answered that current part time instructors would continue as they were right now. Basically, at the end of this process, they would just be wearing a different uniform so to speak. The goal was not to tear what they had apart, but it was to take what they had to make it better and build a better department. Ms. Thackaberry apologized for the lack of communication in regard to this. She felt like this was her fault. It was asked via Zoom if the registration would still take place online with LSU. Ms. Thackaberry answered that they really did not know the complete answer to that, but it would be on the list for the transition team to work on. Infrastructure would stay the same until the actual transition occurred so billing would continue as it had been.

Questions via Zoom were asked regarding whether lead evaluators approved by LSU would still be able to evaluate practical motor skills. Mr. Wallis stated that they were not anticipating any changes. Mr. Lindberg stated that he knew it would take time to change over but he requested at some point a game plan on how the new process and management lineup would look after the transition was completed. Mr. Wallis stated that at this point they were still in the evaluation phase, but the intent of the commission was to produce a more regionalized approach to delivery of services. They would be evaluating the department and every detail regarding each section to optimize how it functioned. Loree did add that the lady who was supposed to start Monday in the accounts receivable position declined the position so this would be added to the vacant position list.

It was asked via Zoom if there would be better communication with PIAL after the fire marshal's office took over and would they be more on the same page which included using the same books, training standards, addressing the lack of a training center in various training centers etc. PIAL required them to use an approved training center and FETI was two hours away. Mr. Major stated that the relationship

between FETI and PIAL already existed. They were hoping to continue the current relationship and enhance the relationship and improve it. It was possible that they could coordinate efforts better.

Comment was added that departments were getting hammered on PIAL ratings because of unreasonable demands on small departments versus large departments because of training and facilities. Another question was asked regarding the pursuit of a more regional approach to more training and certification. Mr. Major stated that the reschedules and rearrangements that they had currently been doing were strictly for the rural departments. Mr. Wallis stated that their goal in the future was listening to the customer, however. There would be enhanced levels of communication and added programs based on what was needed as expressed by the customer. They would definitely all be working together to produce a product they could all be proud of. It was also asked if the commission advisory committee would remain in place allowing for representation of all regions in the state in regard to certification after the transition took place. Mr. Major responded that it would.

This concluded the presentation of the chairman's report.

Old Business

Mr. Major opened the floor for the presentation of old business. None was voiced from the commission.

Mr. Major requested that Loree repost the accounts receivable position.

This concluded the presentation of old business.

New Business

Mr. Major began the presentation of new business.

Motion was made by Mr. Himel to endorse the transition of any contract with LSU to segregate with /put under new management until the total transfer took place in 2022 and Mr. Browning seconded the motion. No discussion was made. No abstentions or opposition was noted.

MOTION PASSED.

Motion was made by Mr. Browning to use their formal name of Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Academy when referencing the new entity and Mr. Romero seconded the motion. Mr. Major asked if there would be any legal issues with doing this since the permanent transfer had not taken place. Mr. DeCuir stated that there should not be an issue other than the name is used in the revised statute. No other discussion was made. No abstentions or opposition was noted.

MOTION PASSED.

Motion was made by Mr. Himel to move the June 2 regular commission meeting to the week when the Louisiana Fire Chief Conference was being held and was seconded. The date was not determined but Mr. Major stated that he would let Loree know when Mr. Himel let him know. No other discussion was made. No abstentions or opposition was noted.


MOTION PASSED.

Mr. Wallis asked Mr. Shoultz to give a safety assessment. Mr. Shoultz presented the assessment. They had looked at several items and would be performing site visits.

This concluded the presentation of new business.

Motion to adjourn was entertained by Mr. Major. Motion was made and seconded. No objections were voiced.

Meeting was adjourned.



Approved by: Chad Major

6.10.21
Date: _____